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TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4828  
INFO RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO PRIORITY 0478  
RUEHTRO/AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI PRIORITY 0386  
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RUCNIAD/IGAD COLLECTIVE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 KHARTOUM 001357

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

NSC FOR MGA VIN, LETIM  
DEPT PLS PASS USAID FOR AFR/SUDAN  
ADDIS ABABA ALSO FOR USAU

E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: [MOPS](#) [PGOV](#) [PHUM](#) [PINR](#) [PREF](#) [KPKO](#) [AU](#) [SU](#)

SUBJECT: SLA/AW UP IN ARMS AFTER LONG RESPITE

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¶1. (SBU) SUMMARY: The central region of Darfur known as Jebel Marra remains unstable following internal conflict among rebels commanders aligned with Sudanese Liberation Army/Abdul Wahid (SLA/AW). SLA/AW rebels in far northeast North Darfur staged two successful attacks in November on Government of Sudan (GOS) forces. The GOS has responded by arresting SLA/AW sympathizers in the area and moving a column of Chadian rebels to Mellit, approximately 50 km northeast of El Fasher. UN sources dismissed as false various allegations that have appeared on the website Sudantribune.com in recent days. End summary.

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JEBEL MARRA STILL UNSTABLE  
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¶2. (SBU) The SLA/AW-held region of Jebel Marra remains unstable following an internal firefight among local commanders on November 15. According to numerous sources, including SLA/AW General Commander Abdelrahman Abdelgaddur Adam (Gaddura), dissension within the ranks over the rebel movement's stance towards reunification efforts erupted into open conflict. Commanders loyal to Abdul Wahid opposed rebel unification efforts, and captured key commander Abdulla Bakr with the intent to detain him indefinitely. In reaction, Gaddura and other high-ranking commanders fled the rebel stronghold of Deribat to drum up support in other areas of the mountainous region in central Darfur. On November 19, Gaddura reported that areas near Deribat were still unstable, and advised against UN aircraft flying to the area. Independent sources on the ground in Deribat confirmed that local SLA/AW commanders had positioned weaponry facing the town's helipad during the last two weeks of November.

¶3. (SBU) On December 2, Gaddura successfully negotiated for the release of Abdalla Bakr and several other commanders. Bakr told emboff by satphone that he had returned to Deribat, but negotiations were still ongoing for Gaddura to return to the town, regarded as the center of SLA/AW control in Jebel Marra. Bakr noted that he was hopeful that the situation would resolve itself "soon," but was not able to elaborate on how local commanders intended to resolve the internal conflict between pro-Abdul Wahid forces and the pro-unification forces of Gaddura.

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TENSIONS HIGH IN MALHA AFTER SLA/AW ATTACKS  
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¶4. (SBU) SLA/AW-aligned forces conducted two successful assaults

against GOS Central Reserve Police (CRP) patrols northeast of El Fasher in November. On November 18, a Sudan Armed Forces (SAF) convoy comprised of seven Land Cruisers and one truck traveled from El Fasher to Malha and came under attack in the Khurbateekh valley, between Sayeh and Malha, according to UN and rebel sources. SLA/AW Commander Suleiman Marjan took credit for the attack, and told emboff that his forces again attacked GOS forces near the area of Mau on November 20-21. Marjan claimed his forces, working in collaboration with the forces of Dr. Sali Adam Ishaq of SLA/Juba Unity, dispersed the column of GOS troops and captured significant military hardware. In addition, Marjan claimed that his forces captured 70 soldiers, most of whom belonged to (Marjan's own) Meidob tribe. "We knew most of those we captured, and many of them even have brothers fighting on our side," he stated. "We know that the government recruited them into the Central Reserve Police to divide the Meidob tribe, so we later released them." Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) officials told UNAMID's Joint Mission Analysis Center (JMAC) that Marjan's attack killed 29 SAF soldiers, a figure which Marjan denied.

15. (SBU) GOS retaliation for the attacks came swiftly. According to UN sources, on November 25 approximately 12 vehicles from the SAF garrison in Malha traveled to the town of El Hara (northeast of Malha) and searched for persons affiliated with SLA/AW. Witness reported to UN sources that the SAF employed intimidation tactics, beating civilians in the market place and arresting three people alleged to be SLA/AW supporters. At least one person had to be taken to the Malha clinic for treatment as result of the beatings by the SAF. The same convoy of 12 SAF vehicles continued on to Jebel Eisa, a village northwest of Malha and the stronghold of Marjan's faction, where SAF followed a similar procedure while in search of SLA/AW personnel or supporters. Sources in Malha town told emboff that the raids on El Hara and Jebel Eisa were perpetrated by the GOS military as well as elements of the National Intelligence and

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Security Services (NISS) and Arab militia. They claimed the searches were accompanied by extensive looting of properties and cash, and that ten persons were arrested on charges of providing intelligence to rebel groups as well as encouraging local people not to participate in voter registration. The ten arrested are reportedly being detained by NISS in Malha.

16. (SBU) JMAC and rebel sources reported on December 2 that a large number of Chadian Armed Opposition Group (CAOG) forces had moved to Mellit, the GOS stronghold northeast of El Fasher. (Note: Although based in the areas northwest of Kutum since mid-2009, the CAOGs remain a highly mobile group. End note.) By the morning of December 3, there were no clashes reported between SLA/AW rebels and CAOGs under the control of SAF.

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UNAMID DISMISSES ALLEGATION OF KILLINGS IN WEST DARFUR  
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17. (SBU) On November 29, a story appeared on Sudantribune.com reporting the killings of seven internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Deleij IDP camp, approximately 50 km southwest of Zalingei. The story alleged that GOS security forces had killed the IDPs, and that UNAMID peacekeepers "were present in the area but did not intervene" to prevent the killing. (Note: The story was attributed to a source who has frequently proven to be unreliable, the self-proclaimed "Spokesman of Darfuri IDPs" Hussain Abu Sharati. End Note.) On December 1, UNAMID dismissed the allegations as false, noting that "UNAMID investigated the allegations, meeting with IDPs and the Umdahs of Deleij camp who assured UNAMID that no killings took place as reported by the ST and that the voters' registration process in the area was concluded with no problems."

18. (SBU) Though the allegations of killings of IDPs in Deleij camp proved to be false, UN sources reported an incident took place in Deleij on November 22 in which three Arab militiamen got drunk in the camp's market and proceeded to Haya Salaam IDP camp, where the intoxicated militiamen started shooting indiscriminately. The IDPs overpowered them and killed one, and subsequently paid a blood money tribute to the Arab tribe for the killing. Following this incident,

a UN patrol observed seven SUVs and a large truck with approximately 60 uniformed, armed men moving towards Deleij. Sources described the situation there as an uneasy calm.

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ALLEGED FIGHTING IN JEBEL MARRA ALSO UNSUBSTANTIATED  
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¶9. (SBU) On December 1, Haroun Abdel Karim, identifying himself as a commander of SLA/AW, told Sudan Tribune that rebel forces had repelled a GOS attack near Jiba in Jebel Marra and killed five government soldiers. Emboff spoke with several SLA/AW commanders in Jebel Marra who were not familiar with the location "Jiba" nor did they affirm any recent fighting had taken place. (Note: Haroun Abdel Karim is not a SLA/AW commander known to UNAMID or embassy staff. End note.) JMAC was similarly unaware of any fighting between the GOS and SLA/AW in Jebel Marra in recent days.

¶10. (SBU) Comment: Following nine months of somnolence, the forces of SLA/AW awoke in November. Internecine fighting in Jebel Marra over loyalty to Abdul Wahid has left his movement in disarray. Although it weakened the command control of Gaddura, the internal struggle has strengthened the hand of the movement's Parisian leader. The successful attacks by Suleiman Marjan in the far north of North Darfur point to weakened SAF defenses. Reports regarding the movement of CAOGs to Mellit are disturbing, and may indicate a further escalation of GOS-rebel hostilities. The next week will show whether the CAOGs will become the SAF's go-to cavalry for ground attacks against a well-supplied rebel force, or whether their movement represents a permanent relocation of the CAOG from northwest of Kutum to the Meidob heartland in far north North Darfur. End comment.

WHITEHEAD